



GUIDELINES FOR THE EX-ANTE EVALUATION OF 2014-2020 EMFF OPs

Updated March 2014

This document is based on the consolidated version (COD 2011/ 0380 of 10 February 2014) of the amended proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund [repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 and Council Regulation(EC) No 861/2006 and Council Regulation No XXX/2011 on integrated maritime policy]

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INTRODUCTION

The Commission's proposal for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) foresees that the 2014-2020 EMFF OPs should be subject to *ex-ante* evaluation, in line with the Common Provision Regulation.

The *Ex ante* evaluation supports the process of developing a policy programme. It is performed before its implementation and involves a range of stakeholders. It assesses whether:

- needs have been diagnosed correctly;
- the strategy and objectives proposed are relevant to those needs;
- the approach proposed is coherent and consistent with Community policies and guidelines;
- the assumptions concerning expected results and impacts are realistic and in line with the resources available.

This process should enable successive drafts of the programme to be refined and improved so that it is more likely to achieve its objectives in a cost-effective manner.

The *ex-ante* evaluation lays the foundations of monitoring and evaluation activities, ensuring that all necessary information is available and that an adequate system will provide the data needed to assess the programme's results and impacts..

The Common Provisions Regulation¹. contains elements concerning strategic planning and programming, conditionalities and performance review, as well as arrangements for monitoring and evaluation, common to all programmes under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds). Article 55 covers the common requirements for *ex-ante* evaluations.

Article 117 of the draft EMFF Regulation² contains additional elements specific to EMFF OPs.

What is new compared to the previous period?

- **The elements to be assessed by *ex-ante* evaluation are more extensive and include aspects which go beyond the strategy and content of the programme**, such as the adequacy of human resources and administrative capacity for management of the programme.
- ***Ex ante* evaluation has become more integrated into the programme design process** by involving the *ex-ante* evaluator from an early stage of programme development. The new requirements advocate a more iterative process between evaluator and Managing Authority. This should lead to a more efficient process, and a better outcome, but also presents specific challenges.
- **The process of planning and conducting the *ex-ante* evaluation has become more interlinked with parallel processes** (Programming, negotiation of the Partnership Agreement, etc.). This is both more ambitious and more demanding to implement.

¹ Regulation (EU) N° 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the common provisions on the ERDF, the ESF, the EAFRD and the EMFF (...), of 17 December 2013.

² European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (COM (2011) 804 final, amended 24/2/2013 ([COM \(2013\) 245](#))). The final text of the EMFF needs to be adopted by the EP and should be available in June 2014.

These *ex-ante* guidelines are intended to provide those responsible for managing and conducting the *ex-ante* evaluations with a fuller understanding of how to translate the legal texts into a practical and successful exercise which improves the quality of the EMFF OP.

Although the guidelines cannot cover every single question which may arise during the *ex-ante* evaluation, the document aims to give practical guidance on the most important issues and common concerns, to ensure that nothing essential is overlooked and to avoid unnecessary pitfalls. It is intended to help Managing Authorities and evaluators, socio-economic partners and European Commission staff who have to deal with various aspects of the *ex-ante* evaluation of EMFF Programmes. These guidelines are not binding, and Managing Authorities may choose to use other approaches and methods provided that the legal requirements are fulfilled.

Chapter 1 discusses WHY *ex-ante* evaluation should be conducted, setting out the rationale and purpose of *ex-ante* evaluation.

Chapter 2 explores HOW the *ex-ante* evaluation should be conducted, providing practical guidance on the process including how to link it to programme development and the Strategic Environmental Assessment. This chapter also explains the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders and includes a description of necessary consultation procedures.

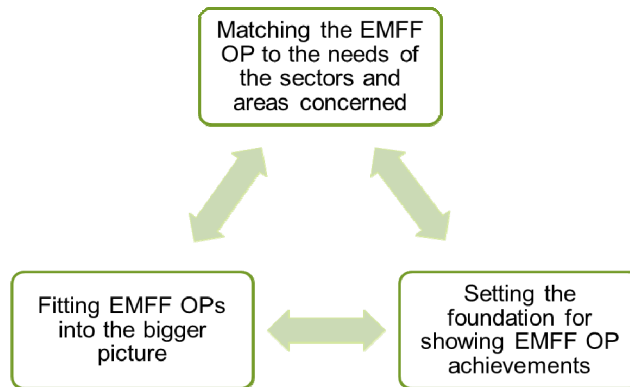
Chapter 3 goes article by article through the relevant legal provisions, highlighting what must be covered by the *ex-ante* evaluation.

The annexes provides a standard Table of Content for the *ex-ante* evaluation report and specific information related to the SEA.

1 WHY EX-ANTE EVALUATION?

The key role of the *ex-ante* evaluation is to contribute to the development of an EMFF OP which is in line with the needs of the Member State on the one hand and with EU wide priorities on the other hand. Moreover, the *ex-ante* evaluation plays a practical role in relation to the delivery and evaluation of the programme.

Role of the *ex-ante* evaluation in design and evaluation of EMFF Programmes.



Source: Adapted from the EAFRD draft guidelines

1.1 Matching the EMFF OP to the needs of the sectors and areas concerned

The *ex-ante* evaluation is intended to help ensure that what is proposed in the programme makes sense, is logical and justified, and that the proposed priorities, objectives, measures and allocations of resources are appropriate in order to respond to the needs identified. It should act as a check to see if the needs assessment is comprehensive and balanced, whether the objectives are in line with the needs identified, and whether the strategy, activities and resource allocation proposed in the programme are likely to achieve its objectives and targets. Where appropriate it should make recommendations to improve the draft programme.

In addition to the programme content, a range of associated elements, such as delivery mechanisms, administrative and advisory capacity, monitoring and evaluation procedures should also be assessed to see whether the capacity and support available are appropriate to implement the programme as foreseen.

The *ex-ante* evaluator is able to draw on the experience of the former programming period (e.g. through mid-term and *ex post* evaluations) to improve the design and implementation of the new programmes

The use of external experts brings not only an independent objective view to the process, but also specific expertise which can contribute to improving the final result. A good *ex-ante* evaluation undertaken by a skilled and knowledgeable evaluator can contribute to more a effective use of the funds available, increase the achievements of the programme, and save time and resources in programme implementation.

1.2 Fitting EMFF OPs into the bigger picture

As EMFF Programmes are not the only policy interventions affecting the fisheries and aquaculture sector, one of the roles of the *ex-ante* evaluation is to check that different instruments complement each other. In this respect the particular contribution of the *ex-ante* evaluation is to:

- **Assess the consistency of the EMFF OP with the Common Fisheries Policy.** The EMFF is the financial instrument supporting the CFP and the OP should support the implementation of its basic principles (elimination of discards, achievement of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), etc.).
- **Assess interaction between the EMFF Programme and interventions supported by other national/regional funds.** There may be a range of national or regional policies having an influence on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and fisheries-dependent communities. The interactions between such instruments and the EMFF should be considered in the *ex-ante* evaluation.
- **Consider the consistency with other ESI funds programmes (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD):** The Common Strategic Framework of the European Union provides the overarching framework coordinating the strategic focus of the different contributing funds and describing how they may contribute to the EU2020 objectives and to the targets of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth³. This is translated in eleven Thematic Objectives (Article 9 of the CPR), four of which applies to the EMFF⁴. At Member State level the Partnership Agreements draw together the strategies of the individual programmes, and describe the arrangements made for effective and efficient implementation and coordination.

1.3 Setting –the foundation for showing the achievements of the EMFF OP

The *ex-ante* evaluation contributes to the development of a new monitoring and evaluation system for the 2014-2020 period. A good *ex-ante* provides a solid foundation for monitoring and evaluation, which will contribute to effective programme steering, and enable the achievements of the EMFF OP to be demonstrated throughout the programme implementation cycle. The specific contribution of the *ex-ante* is to:

- **Ensure that all relevant indicators are included** in the programme with appropriate target and milestone values. Check the feasibility of planned values for output and result indicators in relation to the resource allocation proposed.
- **Assess the arrangements for monitoring** the implementation of the OP to ensure that the right data is available at the right time..
- **Validate the evaluation plan** attached to the OP, to mitigate possible problems linked to evaluation during the programming period and ensure that the right evaluation can be carried out at the right moment.

³ Article 10 of the CPR

⁴ TO 3 Competitiveness of SMEs, TO 4 Shift towards a low-carbon economy; TO 6 Biodiversity; TO 8 Employment.

2 THE *EX-ANTE* EVALUATION PROCESS

The *ex-ante* evaluation is not a snapshot at a moment in time, but should be seen as part of an ongoing process. In order to be most effective, the *ex-ante* evaluation needs to accompany the design process of the EMFF Programme and to be integrated with it.

2.1 Financing the *ex-ante* evaluation

Preparatory costs for the 2014-2020 period, including the costs of *ex-ante* evaluations, may be financed from the technical assistance envelope of the EFF.

2.2 What are roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the *ex-ante* evaluation and in the Strategic Environmental Assessment?

The legal framework for both the programming process and the SEA require the involvement of stakeholders. These are described in details in the "Code of Conduct on partnership in the framework of the ESI Funds"⁵. The following stakeholders should be involved in the design of the EMFF Programme, the *ex-ante* evaluation and the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the *ex-ante* evaluation process should be discussed and clearly defined. All parties should be made aware of their roles and responsibilities at the beginning of the process.

The Managing Authority plays the key role being responsible for:

- managing the preparation and the drafting of the EMFF Programme;
- organising, facilitating and harnessing a transparent consultation process with socio-economic and institutional partners, ensuring information flows and publicity in the programming phase;
- tendering the *ex-ante* evaluator and SEA experts;
- submitting the programme document and annexes to the European Commission, conducting the programme examination procedure on behalf of the Member State until approval by the European Commission.

The partners represent the significant stakeholders' views and interests. Stakeholders are either direct and indirect beneficiaries or 'partners' in programme implementation in line with the principles of EU support for the CSF Funds, namely: competent regional, local, and other public authorities, economic and social partners, bodies representing the civil society, including environmental institutions, non-governmental organisations covering a broad range of themes, and bodies for promoting equality and non-discrimination. Relevant partners should actively participate in the consultation processes during the programme design and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). During the programme preparation as well as the SEA public consultation they may participate in working and/or Focus Groups, or be involved in consultation and dialogue processes via forums, meetings, seminars, web blogs, etc.

The *ex-ante* evaluator(s) are experts functionally independent of the authorities responsible for programme implementation. Their role is to carry out the *ex-ante* evaluation and they should be

⁵ Delegated Act foreseen in Article 5(3) of the CPR Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013: "Code of Conduct on partnership in the framework of the ESI Funds, See COM C(2013) 9651 final dated 7/01/2014 for a draft text.

engaged from an early stage in the programming process. They should provide their views at each of the three main stages of preparation of the OP (see below).

Environmental Authorities will be involved in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (**SEA**) process. In some Member States they may be responsible for organising the stakeholder consultations linked to the SEA.

The European Commission will use the *ex-ante* evaluation, including the summary description of the process and recommendations and the SEA during the programme negotiation.

2.3 What are the key steps to be considered in the *ex-ante* evaluation and in the Strategic Environmental Assessment?

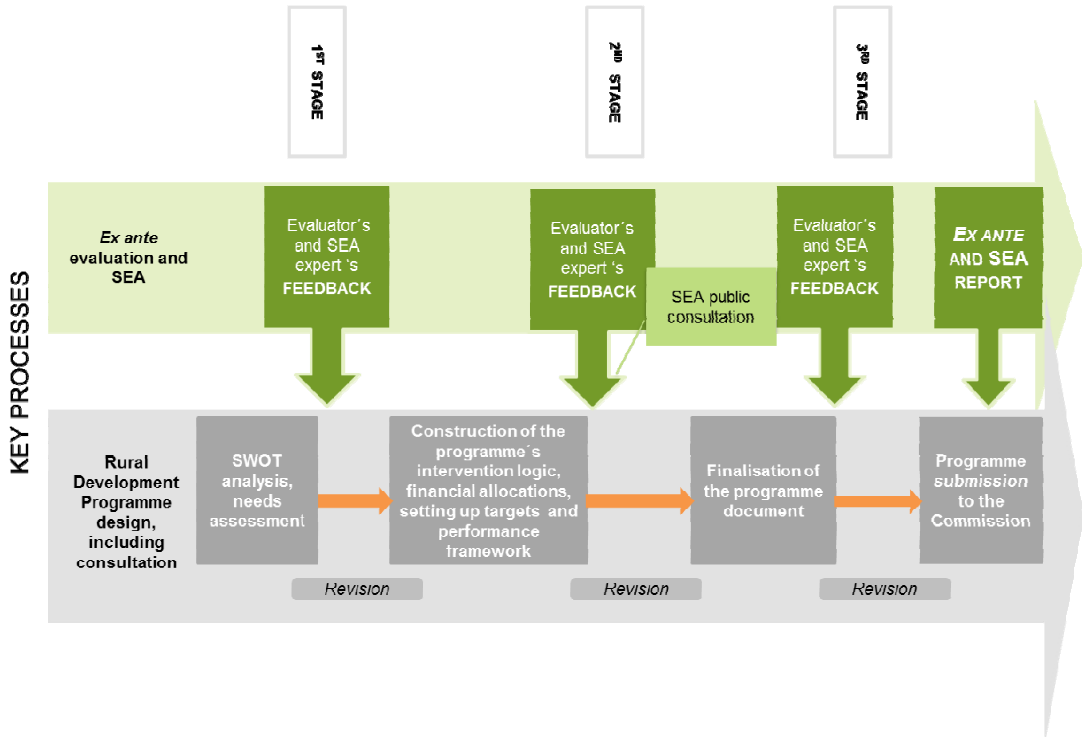
2.3.1 Four elements, three key stages

Three main stages of the programming process can be defined, during which the *ex-ante* evaluators should be engaged in programme design, and their feedback and recommendations be integrated into the content of the evolving programme:

Stage 1: the analysis of the context, the SWOT and the identification of the needs;

Stage 2: the construction of the programme’s intervention logic including the budgetary allocations, establishment of targets and the performance framework;

Stage 3: the definition of the content of the measures and of the delivery mechanisms



Source: DG MARE, based on Helpdesk of the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development

In order to manage this process effectively, it is recommended to set up a **Steering Group** for the ex-ante evaluation composed of representatives from different stakeholder groups. The Steering Group should oversee the programme development process, establish timelines, milestones, inputs needed and identify the time, human and financial resources required. This Steering Group could become the governance body steering the evaluation of the programme during the implementation period.

2.3.2 Description of the main steps of ex-ante evaluation, SEA and consultations in the design of the EMFF Programme

Stage 1: the SWOT analysis and the needs assessment

- The **Managing Authority** in collaboration with other Ministry departments, agencies, institutes, etc. prepares the SWOT analysis and the needs assessment. The SWOT analysis should not be a mere collection of everybody's opinion but should aim at establishing priorities amongst those in order to identify the needs that the programme wants to address.
- The **ex-ante evaluator** gives feedback on these analyses. The evaluator should look at the baseline values of context indicators, assess the coherence and completeness of the SWOT analysis and of the needs to be addressed by EMFF interventions. Any gaps identified should be highlighted, and recommendations made for completing/improving the description and analysis.
- **The SEA experts** at this stage give their point of view on the analysis of the environmental issues, the depth of their assessment, indicators, data and information requirements which need to be taken into account for the Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- **The partners** in the consultation process (competent regional, local, and other public authorities, economic and social partners, bodies representing the civil society, including environmental partners and non-governmental organisations, etc.) should be informed and consulted on the SWOT analysis. They should have the opportunity to give their views on the description of challenges and needs of the maritime and fisheries sectors as well as areas dependent on fisheries, and on the recommendations provided by ex-ante evaluators.
- The **Managing Authority** should then revise the SWOT analysis and needs assessment to take account of the recommendations made.⁶

Stage 2: construction of the intervention logic including the financial allocations, establishment of targets and milestones for the performance framework

- The **Managing Authority** in collaboration with other Ministry departments prepares the intervention logic, and identifies the objectives, measures and actions to be included in the EMFF OP. The Managing Authority also suggests the allocation of resources, targets for output and result indicators, selection of output indicators for the performance framework together with their milestone values.
- At this stage the **ex-ante evaluator** gives feedback on the programme's expected contribution to the thematic objectives outlined in the Common Provisions Regulation, the intervention logic proposed in relation to the needs identified, internal and external coherence, the coherence between expected outputs and results, the allocation of budgetary resources, whether the targets for output and result indicators and selection of output indicators for the performance framework together with their milestone values realistic. The evaluator should in particular verify

⁶ The recommendations of the ex-ante evaluator/SEA experts and the way they were addressed should be recorded in a summary table to be included in the OP (see section 2.3.4).

that milestones and targets are not underestimated to meet the criteria of the performance review. The evaluators should also give their opinion on the monitoring of the programme, checking if the organisation of data collection will provide suitable information for carrying out subsequent evaluations.

- **The SEA experts** at this stage give their judgement on the potential environmental impact of the proposed programme objectives and priorities, measures and actions, as well as on possible cumulative effects of the programme as a whole. The SEA experts should propose alternative options if they identify potential undesirable effects on the environment. In addition, SEA experts should also examine the proposed evaluation criteria and the indicator system related to environmental issues.
- **The Environmental Authorities** launch the consultation process within the SEA focusing on the likely environmental impacts of the proposed draft EMFF OP⁷. The details of the public consultation arrangements are to be determined by the Member State and should reflect the governance structure and the established modus operandi of the public sector in each country.
- **The partners** should be consulted again at this stage, (when no final decisions are taken yet) to discuss the suggested intervention logic including the proposed set of measures and actions under each EMFF priority and the budgets allocated, and considering the feedback from the *ex-ante* evaluator, SEA experts, and the results of the public SEA consultation. The consultation should lead to validation and/or adjustments of the proposed targets and milestones for the performance framework, and may lead to more substantial changes to the intervention logic or structure of the programme.
- Having received this feedback, the **Managing Authority** should review the intervention logic, budgetary allocations, targets and performance milestones to take account of the recommendations made. The recommendations of the *ex-ante* evaluator/SEA experts and the way they were addressed in EMFF OP development should be properly documented using the table proposed in section 2.3.4 .

Stage 3: defining governance arrangements, management and control systems, finalisation of the programme document, including the evaluation plan.

- The **Managing Authority** completes the draft programme document and provides all remaining information as specified for the content of the EMFF OP and for the *ex-ante* evaluator to assess all elements referred to in the legal texts.
- **The SEA experts** assess the environmental impact of the entire draft programme.
- At this stage the ***ex-ante* evaluator** gives final feedback on all parts of the draft programme document, and other aspects related to its implementation (in particular adequacy of administrative resources for the implementation of the EMFF OP) and drafts the final report.
- The **Managing Authority** finalises the draft programme document into taking account the recommendations made. The recommendations of the *ex-ante* evaluator and SEA experts and the way they were addressed should also be included in the table proposed in Section 2.3.4.
- Finally the **Managing Authority** submits the draft EMFF OP and its annexes, including the *ex-ante* evaluation report and the SEA report to the Commission.

⁷ See Annex for further information on SEA..

2.3.3 Contractual relationships and division of responsibilities

The relationships and division of roles and responsibilities between all those involved in the EMFF Programme design, the *ex-ante* evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment should be clearly established from the start of the process. A clear plan and defined lines of communication are fundamental to establishing a good working basis amongst all those involved. This clear definition is crucial for an effective and efficient *ex-ante* evaluation which in turn will contribute positively to a more effective EMFF OP.

These relationships should prominently figure in **the terms of reference for the *ex-ante* evaluation and the SEA**. The ToR specifies the conditions under which the tasks related to the *ex-ante* evaluation and SEA will be conducted, sets up roles and responsibilities, and informs potential *ex-ante* evaluators and SEA experts what is expected in respect to content, process and timing..

2.3.4 Documentation of the *ex-ante* evaluation process and outcomes in the EMFF OP

The detailed structure and presentation of the EMFF OPs will be established through an implementing act⁸. The full *ex-ante* evaluation report should be presented as an Annex to the EMFF OP, whilst the EMFF OP text itself should include a section which describes how the recommendations from the *ex-ante* evaluators have been taken into account in the programme development process. Pending the adoption of the relevant Implement Act, this table might take the following format:

Date	Topic	Recommendation	How the recommendation has been addressed, or justification as to why not taken into account

List of topics to be covered:

- *SWOT analysis, needs assessment;*
- *Construction of the intervention logic, including the contribution to the EU 2020, the internal coherence of the proposed programme and its relationship with other relevant instruments, the establishment of quantified targets and milestones and the distribution of budgetary resources;*
- *Consistency with the CSF, the Partnership Agreement, the relevant country specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and where appropriate at national level, the National Reform Programme;*
- *Rationale for the forms of support proposed in the programme;*
- *Human resources and administrative capacity and the management of the programme;*
- *Procedures for monitoring the programme and collecting the data necessary to carry out evaluations;*
- *Measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women, prevent discrimination and promote sustainable development;*
- *Measures taken to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries;*
- *Requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment.*

⁸ Article 20 (4) of the draft EMFF Regulation,

3 SCOPE OF THE *EX-ANTE* EVALUATION

This section provides an overview of what is required in the *ex-ante* evaluation of EMFF Programmes. The relevant legal provisions setting out the requirements for the *ex-ante* evaluation are Article 55 of the CPR and Article 117 of the EMFF. Article 20 EMFF describes the content of the OP and is also relevant for this overview.

Article 117 of the EMFF

Article 117 of the EMFF lays down that Member States shall ensure that the *ex-ante* evaluator is engaged from an early stage in the process of the development of the EMFF Programme, including (1) the development of the analysis referred to in Article 20 (1)(b), (2) the design of the programme's intervention logic and (3) the establishment of the programme's targets.

(1) SWOT and needs analysis referred to in Article 20 (1)(b)

The analysis of the situation in terms of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) is a prerequisite for the needs assessment and for setting relevant objectives to meet the challenges and needs of the maritime and fisheries sectors and fisheries-dependent communities. The SWOT analysis provides the background against which the interventions proposed can be checked to ensure that they are justified, relevant and adequate in terms of the optimal use of public funds. SWOT analysis and needs assessment are two distinct *steps* in the diagnostic process. The SWOT analysis should cover the whole sectors and communities and will be an important element in the justification of the needs. Needs are choices made between competing demands for support.

Both the SWOT and the needs assessment should be structured along the six Union Priorities included in the EMFF and should be consistent with the Multiannual National Strategy for Aquaculture and the progress to achieve good environmental status through the development and implementation of a marine strategy (MSFD). Specific needs concerning jobs, the environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and promotion of innovation shall be assessed in relation to Union priorities, with a view to identify the most relevant responses at the level of each of the priorities related to those areas.

The contribution of the EMFF to the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) should be identified clearly in the *ex-ante* evaluation.

The *ex-ante* evaluator should ensure that the SWOT analysis and the needs assessment:

- are comprehensive, based on full and appropriate data (context indicators), and provide a holistic picture of the sectors and communities;
- logically interlink the identified needs with the SWOT;
- are consistent and complementary to other ESI programmes, as established in the Partnership Agreement;
- are consistent with the SEA;
- integrate the environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation and innovation as cross-cutting priorities of the EU2020 Strategy;
- enable the needs of particular stakeholder groups, people and territories to be differentiated and addressed;

- take account of lessons from past interventions;
- were developed in collaboration with the partnership in conformity with the Code of Conduct referred to in Article 5.4 of the CPR.

(2) Intervention logic:

The design of the intervention logic is closely linked with the assessment of:

- the contribution of the EMFF OP to the CFP
- the contribution of the EMFF OP to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth taking into account national needs;
- the external consistency of the selected thematic objectives, priorities and programme objectives with the CSF, the Partnership Agreement, other relevant instruments and country-specific recommendations of the EU;
- the internal coherence of the proposed programme or activity;
- the links between the intended outputs and the expected results;
- the consistency of the budgetary resources with the programme objectives.

(3) Establishment of the programme targets:

The identification of appropriate quantified targets for common indicators directly related to the achievements of the Union Priorities is vitally important for measuring the extent to which the original objectives of the programme are actually being met. During programme implementation, progress towards each of the target values will be reported in the Annual Implementation Report, whilst the achievement of milestones will be used to take a decision on the allocation of the performance reserve.

The responsibility for establishing appropriate milestones and target values for output and result indicators rests with the Managing Authority.

The evaluation team should verify that these values have been properly defined and assess the reliability of the estimates made in relation to the measures included in the OP and the budget proposed, making recommendations for modifications if appropriate. It should also check that the sources of information used are reliable and the methods proposed for their calculation rigorous.

Article 55(1) of the CPR

This article specifies that each programme should be the subject of *ex-ante* evaluation. Member States are responsible for carrying out these evaluations whose purpose is to improve the quality of design of each EMFF OP.

Article 55(2) of the CPR

Article 55(2) of the CPR lays down that *ex-ante* evaluation shall be carried out under the responsibility of the authority responsible for the preparation of the programme. It shall be submitted to the Commission at the same time as the programme together with an executive summary.

Article 55(3)(a) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(a) of the CPR requires the *ex-ante* evaluation to appraise the contribution of the EMFF OP to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, having regard to the selected thematic objectives and priorities, whilst taking into account national and regional needs and potential for development as well as lessons drawn from previous programming periods.

Europe 2020 provides an overarching vision in pursuing smart, sustainable and inclusive outcomes, fostering innovation and alleviating the pressure on our environment and the planet's climate. The intervention logic of each EMFF OP has to contribute to this common purpose but also address the specific needs of the sectors and communities targeted by the programme.

The *ex-ante* evaluator examines how the intervention logic of the EMFF OP and the choice of Union Priorities and associated measures will contribute to the thematic objectives of the Common Provisions Regulation, while addressing the specific needs of the sectors and communities. The links should be clear and convincing along the whole results chain.

Article 55(3)(b) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(b) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising the internal coherence of the proposed programme and its relation to other relevant instruments. A coherent strategy facilitates the achievement of objectives by taking advantage of potential synergies whilst avoiding contradictions and gaps.

A policy intervention can be considered to be coherent if:

- it clearly defines its objectives and plausibly explains by which measures they can be reached;
- it promotes positive reinforcement between its objectives and measures, avoiding contradictions and gaps.

In the EMFF OPs, internal coherence is demonstrated through the presentation of the intervention logic, showing the selected priorities and the measures selected to achieve them. The selected priorities should be consistent with the SWOT and needs assessment.

The analysis of the internal coherence by the *ex-ante* evaluator shall:

- provide a structured assessment of the programme, demonstrating that the results chain is logically structured (this could be illustrated graphically, with a flow-chart or another type of diagram);
- appraise the intervention logic as presented, identifying whether the selected priorities match the needs assessment;
- assess the coherence between the objectives;
- analyse the degree to which the measures identified are adequate to meet the objectives set in the programme and to analyse how the various measures complement each other in promoting the achievement of these objectives.

Article 55(3)(c) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(c) of the CPR lays down the *ex-ante* evaluation task of appraising the consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme.

In the current context of limited resources, the need to prioritise and concentrate is of increased importance. The programme should demonstrate that the allocation of financial resources to the Union Priorities is balanced and appropriate to meet the objectives that have been set.

To ensure consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the programme objectives the *ex-ante* evaluator should examine:

- to what extent expenditures is directed towards the needs and challenges identified in the SWOT and needs assessment;
- in how far the objectives that are more influential and hold a higher strategic value are also allocated a larger portion of the budget;
- the consistency between the unit cost of actions envisaged and the proposed level of expenditure;
- the wider picture, taking into account other policy interventions and sources of support, particularly those from the other ESI funds.

Article 55(3)(d) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(d) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising the consistency of the selected thematic objectives, priorities and corresponding objectives of the programme with the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Agreement and the relevant country-specific recommendations. This task also relates to the external coherence of the EMFF OP, looking at the horizontal interactions between what is foreseen under the EMFF OP, and what is planned under other ESI Funds and sectoral programmes, policy instruments and strategies.

To be able to harmonise policy interventions the following issues should be taken into account:

- a strict demarcation of interventions may leave important policy gaps and exclude important beneficiary groups; it should be avoided when possible by fostering complementarity, coordination and cooperation between the different interventions;
- overlap of interventions should not create contradictions, which would result in a loss of efficiency;
- cross-funds coordination is a way of avoiding these problems, but the higher administrative burden that it may entail should not be imposed only on regional administrations or local development agencies.

Article 55(3)(e) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(e) of the CPR requires the appraisal of the relevance and clarity of the proposed programme indicators included in the EMFF OP. Like all ESI Funds for the period 2014-2020, the EMFF will be result-oriented. Therefore the measurement of the progress of the programme and the establishment of an adequate measurement system based on common indicators is essential to assess how far the expected objectives have been achieved..

In the EMFF, the choice of indicators is linked to the specific objectives selected (common result indicators) or to the choice of measures activated by the Member State (common output indicators). Output indicators provide information on the progress of the main measures of the EMFF, whilst result indicators give an indication of the effects of these interventions. These will need to be validated using appropriate evaluation methods, which should be presented in the evaluation plan.

A set of common indicators will be adopted in line with Article 110 of the EMFF. These should be used in each EMFF OPs. All proposed programme indicators should be assessed by the *ex-ante* evaluator. There are no programme-specific indicators foreseen for the EMFF, although the Member States can decide to use further sets of indicators on a voluntary basis.

Article 55(3)(f) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(f) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising the contribution of expected outputs to results. This task represents one of the essential purposes of the *ex-ante* evaluation in assessing whether or not the EMFF programme, in producing outputs, will achieve the expected results in bringing the intended change.

The *ex-ante* evaluator should verify the intervention logic of each priority and of the programme as a whole, and identify any gaps and inconsistencies in order to improve the programme's intervention logic.

The *ex-ante* evaluator should scrutinize the assumptions made to determine how the planned actions supposedly lead to the desired results. If the evaluators consider that these links are not convincing, they should consider alternatives to recommend to the Managing Authority.

Article 55(3)(g) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(g) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising whether quantified target values for indicators are realistic, having regard to the support envisaged.

Once the expected outputs have been validated by the *ex-ante* team, they should check whether the expected targets for output indicators are realistic and achievable, taking into account the planned budgetary resources allocated to each priority. To do this, the Managing Authority should provide the *ex-ante* evaluators with data regarding the financial allocations foreseen for each measure. The *ex-ante* evaluator can then assess the reliability of these forecasts, using available information such as unit costs in former programming period, size of the fleet segments affected by specific measures such as permanent cessation, etc.

The financial tables included in the OP will only present budgetary information at the level of Union Priorities. However the definition of targets and milestones for output indicators will require a financial analysis undertaken at the level of each measure activated in the OP. This analysis should not be included in the OP.

Article 55(3)(h) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(h) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising the rationale for the forms of support proposed in the programme. These are laid down in Article 66 of the CPR and can include grants prizes, repayable assistance, financial instruments or a combination thereof. The OP should specify which form(s) will be chosen for different types of intervention, taking into account specific conditions laid out in the EMFF regulation such as those related to support for processing companies, but also specific types of beneficiaries or territories. In general, financial instruments could be envisaged for activities providing additional revenues.

The *ex-ante* evaluator should also assess the methods used for the calculation of simplified costs options, additional costs or income foregone or compensations for the activities listed in Article 20 (2) of the EMFF. Where relevant, information on advance payments to FLAGs under Article 63 could also be assessed.

The *ex-ante* evaluation should appraise the rationale of the proposed forms of support of the EMFF OP, considering various factors, such as the availability of credit from mainstream sources, the viability of the various sectors involved, specific situations of targeted beneficiary groups, etc. On the basis of this appraisal, the evaluator may recommend an alternative combination of support forms likely to be more relevant to achieve the intended changes.

Article 55(3)(i) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(i) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising the human resources and administrative capacity for the management of the programme. The implementation and the performance of the EMFF OP will be compromised without adequate resources, organisation and capacity for its management, and administration.

Adequate provision of human resources and administrative capacity for the management of the programme, including the cooperation among key institutions in the implementation of the programme and the monitoring of its progress is therefore an essential part of the strategy for an effective EMFF OP and should be assessed in the *ex-ante* evaluation, including administrative capacity for data collection and control.

If the text of the EMFF OP does not provide sufficient detail on the human resources and administrative capacity to enable the evaluator to take a view on whether it is sufficient for effective programme implementation, then recommendations for reinforcement of this section should be made.

Once adequate information is available, the evaluator should assess whether the arrangements and resources described will be sufficient to support effective delivery of the programme as designed, i.e. to implement the measures, numbers of planned operations, timescale, etc. set out in the EMFF OP.

Article 55(3)(j) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(j) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising the suitability of the procedures for monitoring the programme and for collecting the data necessary to carry out evaluations.

Demonstrating and improving the effectiveness of the policy depends on appropriate monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, each EMFF OP should include an analysis of needs relating to monitoring and evaluation and a description of the monitoring system and data collection methods, as well as an Evaluation Plan. The monitoring system should collect at least the information required by the Implementing Act foreseen in Article 108 of the EMFF regulation as well as the information foreseen in Article 125 (8) of the CPR and stored in the electronic system foreseen in Article 111 of the EMFF.

The monitoring and evaluation system should deliver topical information on the progress and achievements of maritime and fisheries policy, and assess impact, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of EMFF interventions. To achieve these goals, key information on the implementation should be recorded, maintained, and aggregated in respect of a wide range of information demands. The list of common indicators, relating to the initial situation as well as to the financial execution, outputs, and results used by the programme should be specified in the monitoring and evaluation section of the OP. Member States should organise the collection of the requisite data and supply the various pieces of information provided by the monitoring system to the evaluators. As specified in Article 112 of the EMFF, beneficiaries of support (including FLAGs) should provide the Managing Authority and/or appointed evaluators or other bodies delegated to perform functions on its behalf, all the data and information necessary for monitoring and evaluation of the programme, in particular in relation to meeting specific objectives and priorities.

The *ex-ante* evaluator is required to assess the suitability of procedures for monitoring the programme, and for collecting the data necessary to carry out evaluations, as well as the content of the Evaluation Plan, and to assess whether adequate resources are allocated to address the identified needs in this area. The *ex-ante* evaluation should ensure that there is an appropriate system to record, maintain, manage and report the statistical information on the programme implementation required for the purposes of monitoring, as well as adequate procedures and data collection to gather and maintain key information for evaluation according to the Evaluation Plan. The *ex-ante* evaluator should also assess the completeness of the Evaluation Plan and, as necessary, provide suggestions to improve its quality.

This will require:

- ensuring the adequacy and completeness of data for monitoring and evaluation along the whole programme cycle;
- making sure that the monitoring system is reliable, effectively manageable, compatible with other monitoring systems at national level (e.g. for other ESI Funds) and the EU data processing systems, and flexible enough to respond to varied information demands;
- ensuring that the Evaluation Plan conforms to the minimum requirements and is precise and comprehensive enough to set out the evaluation activities but remains sufficiently flexible for adjusting the needs for information gathering, surveys and case studies which may arise at a later point in time;
- assessing whether the resources allocated are sufficient to respond to the identified needs and proposed activities.

Article 55(3)(k) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(k) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising the suitability of milestones selected for the performance framework in line with the enhanced results-orientation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for the period 2014-2020. This performance framework must be included in each programme in order to allow assessing progress towards the defined milestones. This is a new element for EMFF Programmes.

The performance framework⁹ is a table in which a sub-set of common indicators (financial and output in the case of the EMFF) is presented with target values for 2023 and milestones (intermediate values to be achieved) for 2018. The choice of output indicators included in the performance framework will depend on the strategic orientations taken by the Programme. However, these must represent more than 50% of the budgetary allocation for each Union Priority¹⁰.

The evaluators have already assessed the quantified target values for output indicators under the task related to Article 55(3)(g). For this new task, they should also assess the suitability of the output indicators selected for the performance framework, together with their milestone value.

Article 55(3)(l) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(l) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising the adequacy of planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent any discrimination, in particular as regards accessibility for persons with disabilities.

⁹ The method to be used for establishing the performance framework is described in the Annex II of the CPR

¹⁰ Detailed information on the PF are included in the relevant Delegated and Implementing Acts related to the CPR.

These principles should be taken into account throughout the programme design, and it is the function of the *ex-ante* evaluation to guarantee that this has actually been the case. The inclusion of groups at risk of discrimination into the design and implementation of the EMFF OP will widen both the scope of interventions and the basis of support for the programme.

The evaluation team will have to:

- analyse the programming process and assess the extent to which the objectives of promoting equality and non-discrimination have been taken into account during programme preparation;
- assess the programming documents, verifying that the principles have been properly integrated into the relevant sub-sections of the programme;
- assess the expected contribution of the programme in respect of the promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination.

Article 55(3)(m) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(m) of the CPR lays down the task of appraising the adequacy of planned measures to promote sustainable development. This task does not only cover the specific actions proposed for support in relation to individual Union Priorities, but should address the whole balance of the programme.

Article 55(3)(n) of the CPR

Article 55(3)(n) requires an assessment of the measures planned to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

The *ex-ante* evaluator should analyse the description of the management and control systems foreseen for the implementation and detect possible initiatives that could be taken to further reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries.

- This could include the targeted use of the simplified cost options included in Article 67 of the CPR.
- Special attention should be given to the delivery mechanisms foreseen for CLLD if relevant, taking into account the tasks of the local action groups as described in Article 34.3 of the CPR and the possibility for the Managing Authority to delegate further tasks to the FLAGs (Article 62.5 of the EMFF regulation).
- Financial engineering facilities should also be assessed, especially the potential for common instruments with other funds.

Article 55(4) of the CPR

Article 55(4) of the CPR provides the possibility to incorporate where appropriate the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment set out in the Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

The SEA Directive has the objective *to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans*

and programmes [...] by ensuring that [...] an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The legal obligation to carry out an environmental assessment is applied to the EMFF OP mainly by Article 3(2)(a) of the SEA Directive, which states that an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes which are prepared for fisheries among other sectors.

See annex 2 for further information on the SEA in the framework of the EMFF.

Annex I. Proposed structure of an ex-ante evaluation report for the EMFF

Executive summary in English

Executive summary in national language

Summary table showing how the recommendations from the *ex-ante* evaluators have been taken into account in the programme

Section I: Introduction

1. Purpose and objectives of the *ex-ante* evaluation
2. Description of the steps taken in conducting the *ex-ante* evaluation
3. Interactions between the *ex-ante* evaluator, the Managing Authority and the SEA evaluator

Section II: The *ex-ante* evaluation report

1. SWOT analysis and needs assessment

2. Strategy and structure of the Operational Programme

- 2.1 Contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy
- 2.2 Contribution to the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy
- 2.3 Consistency with the CSF, Partnership Agreement, country-specific recommendations and other relevant instruments
- 2.4 Programme's intervention logic
- 2.5 Proposed forms of support
- 2.6 Expected contribution of the measures chosen to achieve the targets
- 2.7 Consistency of budgetary allocation with the objectives
- 2.8 Provisions for CLLD
- 2.9 Use of Technical Assistance
- 2.10 Relevance and coherence of the programme

3. Assessment of the measures taken to monitor the progress and the results of the OP

- 3.1 Quantified target values for indicators
- 3.2 Suitability of the milestones for the performance framework
- 3.3 Proposed monitoring and evaluation system
- 3.4 The Evaluation Plan

4. Assessment of the planned arrangements for the implementation of the OP

- 4.1 Adequacy of human and administrative capacity for management
- 4.2 Reduction of administrative burden

5. The assessment of horizontal themes

- 5.1 Promotion of equal opportunities, preventing discrimination
- 5.2 Promotion of sustainable development